BY EDWARD GARRETT,

Author of "The Occupations of a Retired Life," "John Winter: a Story of Harvests," "By Still Waters," "Not by Bread Alone," etc.

"I have come to the end of my resources." *p.* 163.

CHAPTER VII.

THE UNEXPECTED WHICH HAPPENS.

MR. ROBERTS' letter ran thus :—

"Dear Minnie,—I thought I should hear from you or your husband before this, but I am rather glad I have not heard, as from your silence I infer that things are going well again with Sydney, and that therefore nothing is wanted from me. I am very pleased it is so. In this world everybody must learn to shift for himself and adapt himself to circumstances. I really thought I was almost too old for anything, but one never knows what may happen till one is put to the pinch. As I suppose you must understand, I have been tolerably lonely since you got married and left me so much to myself; I hope you will be pleased to hear that I have taken a wife of my own. I was married this morning to Miss Betsy Grant, a relation of my landlady's, who has been staying with her a great deal since you went away. I must own there is a great disparity in our ages, but she is so sensible and managing that it does not matter much. She will take care of my interests in every way, and I really need somebody to do that, for I am too soft-hearted all round. The things she has told me about the way she finds her aunt has cheated me all these years are quite astounding, and you never found it out! But, as Betsy says, you'll live and learn by your own experience. You can understand we are not going to stay in our old quarters; we have taken that pretty little cottage—

Myrtle Cottage—on the road by the canal. Of course, we are having a good many expenses, so as I trust Sydney is now doing well, we shall be glad if, at his earliest convenience, he will let us have the trifle I lent him. As you know I'm not much of a letter-writer, I think I had better conclude. My wife sends her compliments, and will be pleased to see you when you and your husband are inclined to pay your respects. And I remain,

"Your affectionate father,

"WILLIAM ROBERTS.

"P.S.—Sydney needn't repay that money till it is quite convenient. Of course, I don't want to put you about."

"That's the only bit of the letter that's poor old father's own," said Minnie, bursting into tears, which the slight touch of half-grudging tenderness called from the dry eyes of her first astonished indignation. "Now there's nobody left to help us at all. She'll think it her wifely duty to see that nobody gets anything from him but herself and her pet relations. I know Betsy Grant well enough!—smooth as butter to those from whom she expects to gain, and hard as nails to those from whom she means to keep! And to think of her making father believe that poor Mrs. Rutter cheated, when she was paid barely enough for our rooms and expenses, and nothing at all for lots of trouble and kindness! Ah! she might have married father herself over and over again if she'd wanted to—and Betsy Grant comes worming into her house to make mischief with a lodger she'd served faithfully for twenty years! O the wickedness of some women! 'Pay our respects' to her, indeed! I'll never go near Myrtle Cottage, for it will be her house and not father's—the sort of person she is!"

Poor Minnie was alone, except for Mrs. Ruffle, who chanced to be in the kitchen that afternoon. Minnie could not contain herself till Sydney came back. She must speak to somebody. Besides, this was none of those mere "money troubles" of which, alas! many people are more ashamed than they are of sin. There was sting enough in what had happened now, even had there been no admixture of "money" in the matter. Minnie sought the good old woman, and first threw down before her a dry, uncommented announcement that her father was married again.

Mrs. Ruffle understood the tone, but probably her response would have been much the same whatever that had been.

"Well, well, my dear," she said, "I've always been o' the Apostle Paul's way o' thinking—that them as is widowed had better so abide. St. Paul argues about many hard matters one can't follow him through—I think because he was a lawyer, and looked at things in their way—but when he gets down to how life had best be managed, I've always thought that following out a little more of his advice on many points would make the world a deal smoother. But that we can do each only for ourselves."

Minnie paused for a minute. She had not thought on the question of second marriage till it suddenly touched her own life in this sharp fashion. There are very few people who reflect on the existence of any prior and possibly repudiated responsibilities and obligations till their own interests are found among these. Minnie stuck to her personal standpoint.

"He's an old man, and he might have thought a little more of his daughter," she cried. "He knew that we were wanting his help so badly—though he makes believe he thinks we don't—and now he goes and gets married just to have somebody to stand up for him and keep him up to not helping us."

"Oh, hush, my dearie," said the old lady. "There's no use nor comfort in talking like this. I know it's hard for you. But just turn it the other way, and the hardness is so common that there's few think o' it at all. How many children care about their parents when they want to marry? Do they wait till they have requited them? Do the boys always wait even till they've done wanting their parents' help, before they go gallivanting round with saucy wenches, who wouldn't put a little finger to loads the old folk have carried for years, but who let them see plain enough what is to come to them in the end,—and what is worst of all, that most of what they've tried to do by hard work and self-denial will be soon undone by frivolity and light-mindedness? Do they—girls or boys—shrink from leaving a widow parent all alone? or from excusing themselves from helping the old home, because of the expenses of the new one they have chosen to start? I've noticed it ain't the poor folk that has no children who are mostly in the poors' house, but those that have plenty o' sons and daughters; but, says the old man or woman, they've got many o' their own to do for, and don't want us a burden on them! Or, if it doesn't come quite so bad as the poors' house, still, does the son take care that his mother is as well dressed after her own way as his wife is—or, at any rate, gets as much money to spend how she pleases,—or that the old man gets his resting-time before the young one thinks of his holidays?"

"Well, I don't know about all that," said Minnie. "I suppose that's nature,—everybody has a right to his turn in life."

"It may be nature,—many ugly things is nature—the ways o' tigers and serpents and such-like," answered Mrs. Ruffle. "But it ain't grace, and human nature ain't finished till it has got grace. The only right way to our rights is through our duties. And there's no kindness to youth itself in making old age not honourable nor worth having. There's many a young married woman—though she may scarcely know it of herself—who would be a sight happier if she had something pleasant before her eyes at the bottom of the hill, but instead of that her face grows sour and her voice sharp as she clutches at anything to stop her on the darkening downward road she knows she's got to tread. But I'm going on talking just because I've seen so much o' this and am free to speak, having no children of my own. An' all the while, poor dear, you can't help fretting against your side of the matter, and I don't deny it's hard enough. It's almost a pity you didn't keep your father with you: he might have shared like Mr. Pyper does with the Comptons, and then he would not have been lonesome."

Minnie pouted. "Father has his ways," she said, "and with him in the house I'd never have felt it was my own."

"Well, well," was Mrs. Ruffle's only response, but Minnie's intuition knew all the old lady thought but did not say. It seemed almost as if it was something in Minnie's own self which rose up and bore witness against her, that if she could not bear and forbear in aught for her father's sake, she could scarcely blame him for taking his own comfort into what he at least believed to be his own management. She gulped down a dry sob, and the whole truth came out.

"Perhaps at another time I shouldn't have minded so much. But now Sydney's out of place, and doesn't seem likely to get anything to do, and we're in debt to father already, and he's wanting to call in the money, and another creditor will be down on us in a day or two—why, why—" and the tears broke out.

"My dearie," said old Mrs. Ruffle, "it's bad enough, but

there's no trouble half so terrible if you catch up with it and look it in the face, as if you let it run ahead of you, and make faces at you round the corner. I thought the master must be out of his situation, but it wasn't for me to ask till you spoke."

"Did the Comptons ever make any remark?" Minnie asked, breathlessly.

Mrs. Ruffle shook her head. "They're not that sort of folk," she said. "Often as I've gone in and sat with them of an evening, they've never said a word about you, except that they hoped you and the master were quite well, and I could always say you were."

"I almost wish they did know," said Minnie. "Mr. Pyper is so kind and wise-like, he might help Sydney to get some work, or he might advise us in some way. I don't know what will become of us! It can't be far off now, whatever it is! I only wish we could die!"

"I'll tell you what I'd advise," reflected Mrs. Ruffle. "But for what has happened, you or Mr. Harrison would likely have soon been taking counsel with your father. As it is, you can't. I'll not say you should. So you get Mr. Harrison to speak to Mr. Pyper instead. And speak out everything to him. Never tell a good man half, and then expect him to give you advice that'll fit the whole. You won't find him surprised at anything, for he knows well what troubles there are in the world, and how bad they make folks feel."

"I shall have a bad bit of work persuading Sydney, he's so proud," said the poor little wife.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FRIEND IN NEED.

MINNIE did not have quite so much difficulty with Sydney as she had expected. He had already keenly felt the grudging spirit in which his father-in-law had laid him under his obligation, though Mr. Roberts himself had certainly taken plenty of favours from Sydney as if they were matters of course. The hope that at any cost—Sydney did not know at what cost, and he scarcely cared—he might now be, as it were, forced to free himself from this obligation was so welcome that it out-balanced a great deal against which he would otherwise have kicked.

Considering the attitude that Sydney had taken up with his old employers, and in maintaining appearances before the neighbours, Minnie was rather astonished that he now showed so little reluctance to give confidences to one who was almost a stranger, and to make a request for advice which, under the circumstances, was very like a direct appeal for help. Poor Minnie did not yet know very much of the world, and had not learned that the very same "pride" which will not humble itself to keep us out of difficulties, often entirely vanishes when we are fairly caught in their mesh! The sad thing in life is, that in the meshes of the disasters this kind of pride brings about, it often entangles those who could and would have easily avoided them, and who suffer far more than it does, when driven to the thankless task of self-extrication.

When Sydney called on Mr. Pyper, and began rather stammeringly to state the object of his visit, the old gentleman proposed that they should take a little turn round the Green, which soon ended in their taking a little turn off the Green, down a no-thoroughfare lane between high hedgerows, and overlooked by no prying back windows. One wonders whether such as Mr. Pyper do these things unconsciously, or in a kind instinct born of many experiences. It is so much easier to tell aching secrets in the darkness or in some position where we need neither meet nor directly avoid our companion's eyes!

Mr. Pyper heard all Sydney had to say, and said very little himself, save now and then to ask a question. When Sydney told why he had lost his situation, the old gentleman only shook his head and said, "It was a pity;" but somehow the young man quite understood that this was not the measure of his reprobation of betting, but rather his chivalrous self-restraint from hitting one who was down. "When God hath stricken, why need we?"—and when we see a brother has just paid a heavy premium for a painful experience, it is but just and courteous for us to infer that he will not incur it again—at least until we see him doing so! This is not the principle of the world, which has much "charity" for almost any error or misdemeanour while its success is possible, and reserves its criticism or condemnation for the sinner whose sentence is already passed. But Mr. Pyper was not of the earth, but of the "salt of the earth." Do we often reflect that each of us must be of the one or of the other?

Mr. Pyper did not compel Sydney to actually ask even his opinion on what he ought to do, still less whether Mr. Pyper thought he could give any help. The old gentleman accepted the young man's confidence as involving this request, just as simply as we accept the visible need for the most trifling service, the opening of a door or the offering of a chair, as sufficient appeal for our prompt courtesy.

"I will not say that I think you will have no difficulty in obtaining an appointment similar to that which is gone," he said. "The competition for these appointments is nowadays quite appalling. Rather I would be inclined to advise you to seize the very worst end of your present position, and see whether it may not be transformed into the best one. To speak plainly, if I were you, I would be loth to risk the chance of losing anything I actually have, in the hope of gaining something in the end. I would rather straightway study what could best be done if there was no possibility of regaining my former position."

"As to risking anything I actually have," said Sydney, with a painful laugh, "that is done already. Even apart from these instalments of the price of my furniture, I have come to the end of my resources."

"So?" answered the old gentleman. "Well, that helps us in one way, because it prevents all doubt about your proper course. You have no debt except for this furniture?"

"None," said Sydney, almost cheerfully. It was so pleasant to be able, at last, to give a virtuously satisfactory answer.

"And when you speak of the end of your resources," observed Mr. Pyper, "what does that mean, exactly? I have found the term to signify such different things."

"It means that all my reserve fund is gone. I have changed my last five-pound note to-day," said Sydney, dismally.

Mr. Pyper faced about briskly. "Will you take me into your house?" he asked. "I am sure Mrs. Harrison must wonder what has become of you. She ought to join in this conversation."

"Poor girl!" sighed the husband, "I have tried to spare her, but I suppose it's no use."

If he hoped that pathetic hint would induce Mr. Pyper to relent, he was mistaken. Though the old gentleman did not actually lead the way to the Harrisons' domicile, he followed Sydney so closely that it almost seemed he did. This was not the first married couple to whose rescue the old bachelor

had been summoned, and so he knew well enough that he must see them together before he could understand how the domestic land lay, and who would be to blame or to admire in whatever course should be finally pursued. Over and over again he had seen the truth of the old jingle—

"A man may spend and yet may fend
If his wife be aught, if his wife be aught;
A man may spare and yet be bare
If his wife be naught, if his wife be naught."

And he had also seen that many a time the attitude of the less visible partner is censured by the outer world, because the outer world is cognizant of hard facts which are concealed from him or her who has every right to know them. He was convinced that a married couple must stand or fall together—that they cannot be helped apart, nor either without the loyal consent of the other. The old bachelor had often pressed this view of the case so strongly that people had said to him, "You would make marriage a terrible bondage." To which he had replied, "I would show it in time as the awful solemnity which it really is, and then it would be entered on with less rashness and levity."

They found Minnie seated in her little parlour. Mr. Pyper would not let either the husband or the wife drift into any preliminary chat about the weather or the gardens or other superficial interests. Such conventional tattle may serve as a soil in which to plant real things when they are not already full grown. But when they are—well, the sooner they are gathered the better! Mr. Pyper's sturdy truth and directness showed themselves in small things as in great—as, indeed, the deepest things of our nature always do.

"Your husband has honoured me with his confidence, Mrs. Harrison," said he, "and I think we have come to the conclusion that the mere waiting-time—always the worst time—must come to an end at once."

"Oh, I wish it could!" cried Minnie; "but how can it? We cannot force events."

"No, but events may be lying all around us, waiting for our movements to wake them up," said Mr. Pyper. He smiled as he spoke, so that the gate of hard necessity seemed suddenly to fly back and reveal all sorts of bright paths possibly opening from its dingy portal. Though "the art of putting things" is often disgraced by using it to make matters smooth for ourselves or soothing to our vanity, yet there is a Divine side to it, when our neighbour has burdens to bear, and we find the art of putting them so that they do not gall his shoulder!

Then Mr. Pyper turned towards Sydney; he did not yet know how much the wife knew; and he would not even ask the husband either behind her back or in her presence. It was for the husband to realise his duty in that direction without being reminded of it by a mere acquaintance. Sydney understood his gesture.

"My dear," he said, "I have changed our last five-pound note to-day. I know it can't surprise you—you must have felt we were near the end."

"Yes, I guessed," said Minnie; "but I scarcely thought it was quite so bad as that." She began to cry quietly.

"I have had to spend more, one way and another, looking for work than I did when I was in work," sighed Sydney.

"Well, well, it's pretty bad," said Mr. Pyper, "but there's another way to look at it. There's many a couple going about marketing cheerfully enough this Saturday night who would think themselves a great deal better off than they are now if they had five pounds ahead of the day's wage as you have."

"But still, they've got something coming in," observed Sydney, dismally.

"Yes; but so might you have, if you would put yourselves right into their place," answered the old gentleman. "That's the way to baffle adversity. Whatever you've got, put yourself as soon as you can where that is affluence. The danger always is lest we allow what we have had, when we can't keep it any longer, still to drag us down. Why, Mrs. Harrison here would be as bright and cheerful as possible if she were sitting with you in one nice little room, triumphing over all she could manage to do with a few shillings you had brought home."

That vision conquered Minnie. "Yes, Sydney," she cried, "I am sure I should. I can't bear the sight of these things now," and by a motion of her hand she indicated the smart furniture. "We ought never to have had them. Let them go. And let us begin again at the bottom—lower down than we need have done had we been wise at first—as low as ever we can."

"Aye," said Mr. Pyper. "As Bunyan's shepherd sang—

'He that is down need fear no fall.'

That is far easier than standing in slippery places, be they ever so high."

"Then I think we may let the three-years-system people sell the furniture and pay themselves," said Sydney. "We had paid off several instalments before we broke down, so that I suppose after they have got in the balance still due to them, there will be at least enough over to repay Mr. Roberts what he advanced us. And we shall be square with the world, if next door to penniless."

Mr. Pyper thought otherwise. He knew the depreciation of forced sales. But both Sydney and Minnie showed such a simple-hearted readiness to grasp good counsel and to be honestly independent, that he felt he was justified in screening the whole bitterness of the position from them for the present. Facts would reveal it soon enough.

"If you empower me," he said, "I will go on Monday to these people and ask them what they will take as full payment in one lump sum. For that, they will probably make some reduction, just as they charged you interest for the delayed instalment. Then I will advance a cheque for that amount—tush! tush! that will not be much of a favour. We will begin to sell straight away, only we shall do so with greater advantage, and so I shall get my money back directly. And it might be well, as Mr. Roberts is furnishing, for Mrs. Harrison to write to him and ask him if he will like to take payment in kind rather than cash—a valuer would let him know the proper price for anything he fancied. Then there is this house to get rid of. May I ask if you rent it by the quarter?"

"We did," said Sydney, "but as soon as I lost my place I spoke to the landlord, and gave him a quarter's running notice, to be determinable at any time. I did that because I thought my next appointment might lead us in some different direction," Sydney added, with a dreary smile. "The landlord agreed, on condition that we vacated if he got a more permanent tenant, but nobody has turned up yet."

"It is a good thing you arranged that," observed Mr. Pyper. "It was a very sensible plan."

"It was I who thought of it," said Minnie, almost

smiling, with a woman's pathetic pride in a little display of business-like foresight.

"You can't tell what a relief it is to hope to be free from this burden, sir," mused Sydney. "And yet even that relief does not bring any answer to the question, Where is our bread—her bread—to come from? My ambitions are fallen very low down. I would do anything to earn even a pound a week!"

"Anything?" asked Mr. Pyper. "Do you really mean it? If you would be willing to leave the desk and discard your silk hat and take to a corduroy jacket and a rough apron, I could give you a job that you could begin on Monday. No more trouble about it than arranging as we sit here. I'm not the master at our place, you know. I'm only the old clerk. But this bit of patronage is always put in my hands. It's only a porter's place, and it will be vacant in a day or two. As I say, you can come on Monday. Wage, one pound one shilling weekly; hours from six till four; requisites, good character for sobriety and honesty, knowledge of London, and strength to lift considerable weights. I know you are an athlete from what I've heard when we have both been on the top of the 'bus."

Sydney winced a little at the last words. For his athletics were a vanity rather than a reality, and consisted less in actual prowess than in the glib use of technical abbreviations and a fluent acquaintance with newspaper reports. He asked rather humbly what were the height and age of the last man who had been fit for the place.

"Oh, he was a little man, quite elderly," said guileless Mr. Pyper, who did not suspect the motive for this inquiry. "A good old fellow, very superior—an old bachelor, with a hobby for flute-playing."

Sydney and Minnie looked at each other. Her eyes were shining. The pretty idyll of the Ruffles' helpful life was before her, and the thought of any escape from the hateful, shabby gentility which had fretted her soul during the last few days was delightful to her. Sydney understood her look. He checked the ungracious response that "Beggars must not be choosers," ere it had passed his lips, and said only: "Mr. Pyper, I gratefully accept your kind offer, and I trust I shall never cause you to regret having made it."

"Tell me about your little boy." p. 156.

Then, after a few final arrangements as to the forthcoming interview with the furniture-dealers, the old gentleman took his departure, leaving the young couple to themselves. Already another idea had struck him on their behalf—an idea which might have vanished had Sydney given utterance to the churlish proverb he had so wisely suppressed. For it is often from the very best things of life that we shut ourselves out by unconscious self-revelations. If we show "the cloven foot" in the porch, people naturally close the sanctuary door.

Mr. Pyper was not the man to spoil any worthy possibility by a rash beginning. And he wanted to discuss sundry matters with his household friends the Comptons.

(*Continued on page* 177.)

AN UNSOUGHT RECOMPENSE.

BY JENNIE CHAPPELL,

Author of "Her Saddest Blessing," "For Honour's Sake," "Wild Bryonie," etc., etc.

THERE were not a few people who thought it "Rather strange, you know," for young Mrs. Leighton to take such a fancy to an insignificant little "mother's help" as to invite her to stay at Firlands while seeking a situation. "A person in no degree related to her, and of whom she knew next to nothing. Very injudicious, quite absurd!"

That was their view of it. To Mrs. Leighton, Katie Brown was a child of the one Father, and, as a fellow-Christian, a sister indeed. She was poor and lonely, and in ministering to her, Mrs. Leighton felt that she was offering food and shelter to the Lord Himself.

"Is thy cruse of comfort wasting?
Rise, and share it with another."

These words had been Angela Leighton's motto for the past five years, and she had never been disappointed in the solace that insensibly had stolen into her own heart thereby. A wife, a mother, and a widow ere twenty summers had passed over her head, she had still failed to seek comfort at its Source. Even when her dear and only brother had been severed from her by a father's implacable anger, and estrangement almost worse than death, she breathed no appeal to Him whose coming was the herald of heavenly peace. Not until the silvery prattle of her precious boy was hushed, and his sweet eyes closed in death, had her broken spirit crept to the feet of the Divine Healer, who had stricken her thus deeply that His own hand might bind up the wound.

Since that time, terrible though blessed, Angela had lived for others. Her own life, she felt, was done. But in serving those about her, a kind of subdued happiness, like dreamy autumn sunshine, gilded her way, and seemed to grow brighter day by day.

Thus it was that, though thoroughly "independent," as folks say, in her own beautiful but lonely home at Firlands, she came for awhile to take charge of her physician-uncle's bachelor establishment in the out-of-the-way village of Waterbrook. In a similar spirit of gentle, self-forgetful service had she, with her own hands, taken down a cup of tea to the weary girl, who, the maid told her, had walked more than three miles to see the doctor, and been waiting in his surgery nearly an hour. A few words of simple, cordial sympathy had accompanied this welcome refreshment, and Katie Brown's love was won.

So it came about that, one stormy evening, late in autumn, the two sat chatting by firelight in Mrs. Leighton's own room. Katie was to stay at Firlands until she could find a really good home.

"I won't have you hurried into *anything*," Angela said. "In that last place you were simply a drudge. I should like, if possible, to settle you with some good woman—some true mother who would treat you as she would like her own daughter to be treated, should she ever come to be similarly placed. You want to be a real 'help.' If anyone would only give you a reasonable amount of consideration you would make her interests your own, and assist her to the utmost of your power, conscientiously and well. I know your worth, Katie," she concluded, with a smile, "and I want to keep you here until we can find somebody who will appreciate you as I do."

"It is good of you to think so well of me," returned Katie, gratefully, "and, above all, to say so. It makes me feel—oh, so glad and strong! I *would* do my very, very best with anybody who would let me. I love little children, and I do feel, most deeply, what a great and difficult thing it is to train them aright. But to be with people who seem to look upon them only as toys, or encumbrances, or even as a superior kind of pet animal, makes me wretched."

Mrs. Leighton was silent for a few moments. Then she said, in a low tone, "I see more clearly every year I live why it was that my darling Claudie was taken from me. In many ways God had tried to teach me the solemnity of life, the importance for good or evil of every living soul, the responsibility of the charge committed to me. But I did not learn. I was not fit for my trust, and it was withdrawn."

"Tell me about your little boy," said Katie, softly. "How old was he when he died?"

"He was within three days of being four years old. He had been 'playing puffers,' as he called it, up and down the corridor until bed-time, and at eleven o'clock the same night he died. It was croup."

"How dreadfully sudden! How sad—oh, how sad!" murmured sympathetic Katie, and the firelight glittered on her falling tears. "And you had lost your husband before that?"

"Yes, and a brother who was, I think, as dear. My Claudie seemed to be the last link with them both, for along with his father's brightness of temperament and sunny smile, he bore a singularly strong resemblance to Ralph, my brother. Oh, Katie, he was such a lovely boy! His hair was as fair as mine, and curling, while his eyes were very dark brown, and the lashes black. And he had such sweet little ways."

"Did you say your brother's name was Ralph?" asked Katie, thoughtfully.

"Yes, Ralph Ernest Renwick," returned Angela, rather absently, for her mind was just then too much absorbed in memories of the past even to wonder at her companion's seemingly irrelevant query.

"And he is dead?"

"He was killed in the Soudan about two years ago, but he had been dead to me before that. At least, he had parted from my father in great anger, declaring that we should, none of us, ever hear one word from him again. Nor did we; we saw the news of his death in the *Gazette*. He was a dear fellow, but passionate and unyielding."

"He was married?"

"Not to our knowledge; but he may have been, of course. It will be seven years ago next March since Ralph went away."

"It is strange," said Katie, "but I know a little boy in London whose name is Ralph, and who is, I should think, almost exactly like your description of your own little one—golden, curly hair, and most beautiful dark-fringed eyes. I fancy he is about five."

"But what is his surname?"

"That I do not know. I used to see him when I took our children into the park. He was living with some people named Watkins, but he was not their own, and their children seemed to look on him as an interloper. I think I heard that he was a soldier's orphan; but I believe I could find out more about him from a friend, if you would like to know."

"I should, indeed!" cried Angela. "Please do. Oh, Katie, if he can really be—but I must not think of it."

* * * * * * *

It seemed like a miracle. The Watkinses, mother and juveniles, were not at all sorry to part with the child, with whom, as the legacy of an old comrade, the head of the family had burdened them; but to Angela it was as though her own darling had been given back to her. Fatherless and motherless, no other relative appeared to dispute her claim to the boy. Ralph Renwick the second became Mrs. Leighton's adopted child—her heir, her treasure, all her earthly joy.

The name of "auntie" sounds now as sweetly in her ears as "mother" did in days of yore; but she feels that her sunbeam, as she loves to call him, is not her own—he is a loan from God, for the care of whom she will some day humbly and thankfully, and through His help she trusts rejoicingly, answer to Him.

POOR COUSINS.

BY SARAH TYTLER,

Author of "Papers for Thoughtful Girls," etc.

SOME of the woes from which poor cousins suffer in connection with being poor cousins, are of their own making. They are tempted to over-estimate the value of the worldly advantages of which they are destitute. They often keenly covet these loaves and fishes, and become secretly sore because they cannot get what is beyond their reach. They rarely own this, rather they are apt to make a great profession of their high-minded contempt for wealth and luxury. It is the fable of the fox and grapes over again. The poor cousins would not ride in a carriage of any description if they could, they would far rather go on foot. They would not wear velvet and seal-skin, they prefer serge and cloth, or even cotton. Lamb, grouse, and peaches have no charms for the poor cousins, they relish in a far higher degree a white herring, a scrag of mutton, a sour apple. There are happy people whom nature has endowed with simple tastes, who really do not care to be clad in purple and fine linen, and to fare sumptuously every day; who are content, and more than content, with rusticity and homeliness. But as a rule they do not make such a loud assertion of their contentment. They do not prove it by quarrelling with other people whose tastes are different, and who prize what the plain-living philosophers do not crave. They do not protest because there is no occasion for protestation; nobody doubts them, and they do not doubt themselves. "He doth protest too much" is a sure indication of a weak cause—unless, indeed, the protester has been unjustly suspected and accused, and generally goaded into his self-asserting attitude.

If the poor cousins are satisfied with their circumstances, do not let them try to make the rich cousins dissatisfied with theirs. Do not let these hearty admirers of hard work and "short commons," of rugged poverty and rigid austerity, cry them up till their opponents have lost their conceit of their ease and abundance, and languidly wonder how they can strip themselves of their superfluities till their sleep is sweet like that of the labouring man, and they can relish a dry crust or its substitute. Rather let the poor cousins cultivate a kindly sympathy, let them seek to understand the worth of all those dainties and niceties of table and toilet. Let them weigh the security as to the well-being of the future—that as to-day is in its serene prosperity, so will be to-morrow in its tranquil affluence. Let them ponder the social influence and power for good or evil which make the rich cousins courted, caressed, and envied by the mass of their fellow-creatures. Let the poor cousins fairly consider the importance or relative worthlessness of these attributes, and if there is anything in them, let the lookers-on accord to what are certainly among God's gifts, their due—not more than their due, but just their full value. The poor cousins who have not been accustomed to such endowments may not care for them, may have taught themselves, with a certain wisdom, to do without them, and to be indifferent to them; but it does not follow that this is the right estimate, the true balance--if there is any exaggeration, any lurking prejudice and seed of bitterness, it cannot be perfectly right or true. Every human being ought to desire to judge correctly. There is always a danger in a false judgment—the danger of a sudden discovery of its falseness, and a violent rebound from compulsory scorn and forced indifference to an excessive admiration of the good things hitherto slighted and despised, with a passionate longing to attain to them by some means.

If the rich cousins are willing, in a cousinly way, to make the poor cousins free, on occasions, to the enjoyment of what is usually viewed as a goodly inheritance, there is a churlishness in refusing to recognise and acknowledge the goodliness, there is a meanness as well as a harshness in declining the friendly compromise, and putting back the well-disposed hands which would dispense even temporary benefits. How much more manly, and womanly, it is to take them in the spirit in which they are offered, to relish the variety and the fuller experience of life they afford, and when they are inevitably withdrawn to return to the old barer, bleaker paths—not disgusted with them, because they have their counterbalancing, bracing atmosphere, but simply enriched by a new lesson in the lives of men. Be yourselves, you poor cousins, brave and cheerful, ready to be pleased with, and to look with bright, interested, and amused eyes on those novelties of luxuries which are not necessaries to you; feel grateful for every generous purpose, every gentle intention. Don't be self-conscious, touchy, sore, for that only shows that you have grown morbid in your poverty, and have acquired a hugely disproportionate impression of your own disadvantages and defects, with an equally monstrous conception of your well-to-do kindred's

privileges. Don't go looking about for offences, and seeing them where none are meant, otherwise you will baffle and discomfit relations who are doing their best to be of service to you, and you will make ungracious fools of yourselves. Don't look a gift-horse in the mouth. If the gift is not what you wish, if it puts you under too heavy an obligation, and is almost an oppression to you, still, if it was meant in all good faith and good feeling, accept it with similar good faith and good feeling. Learn to comprehend your rich cousins' temptations, and to be charitable with regard to their weaknesses. If they are a little ostentatious, a little self-indulgent; if they strike you as a trifle worldly-minded, you were never similarly tried; and you may be certain that if they fail in what concerns them, you fail quite as much, perhaps a great deal more, in what is your business.

I have yet to mention the great secret which will preserve peace and amity between rich and poor relations, which will cause the rich to respect the poor, and the poor to love the rich. It is summed up in this, my poor cousins—preserve your independence, jealously guard it as a precious treasure. Do not angle for favours which you cannot repay. Do not on any account, if you have the slightest regard for the terms on which you stand, and will henceforth stand to each other, beg or borrow from your neighbour, though he or she is your cousin. One of the most pathetic passages in Thackeray's novel, "Philip," is when poor Philip—hard pressed in his own person, and in the persons of his wife and child—turns upon the friend and companion of his youth, who is hesitatingly proposing to lend him money, and implores him—half fiercely, half piteously—to desist. Both men know that if Philip in his extremity succumbs to the temptation, the relations between them will never again be as they have been, the whole position will be altered. The equality and independence will be gone, and instead of fast friends there will remain, probably, a disappointed debtor and a hardened creditor.

Another warning may be needed where rich and poor cousins are concerned. The life of the poor cousins may be inadvertently spoilt by the life of their rich relations, and neither may be sensible of the mischief till it is done. The contemplation of the gifts of fortune enjoyed by the one branch of the family may poison the existence of the other to which no such boons have been granted. Almost without being aware of it, the poorer branch may adopt standards with which they should have nothing to do—may ask themselves bitterly why they cannot live up to their self-imposed obligations, and fall into such depths of discontent at their failure to do so, as to grow blind and deaf to the unprized blessings in a lot which, however poor it may be, is very much what they choose to make it. Why must we always be making invidious comparisons, or contrasting our own experiences unfavourably with those of our fortunate cousins? It is a less happy, though hardly a less unbecoming propensity, than the reverse inclination to esteem all that is ours perfect, because it is ours. Why do we not have horses to ride, or a pony-phaeton—or even a market-cart? Why have we no holiday trips, though we need them a thousand times more than our cousins require the relaxation? Books, pictures, pretty dresses, are not within our reach to any appreciable extent, while these cousins of ours, these favourites of fortune, command the hall-mark of culture and refinement without limit, and perhaps care little for it. Why should there be such inequality in men's and women's lives—men and women springing from the same stock, long after the days when Adam delved and Eve span? My friends, God sets up one, and puts down another in social rank. He, and He alone, knows what is best for us in this mortal life. Besides, if we will only cherish a better spirit, and open our eyes, we may be able to recognise that the inequality is not what we imagine it, that we possess often an abundance of good things which we have been very foolish and wrong in despising. We may live in a cottage, but there is no reason why that cottage should not be as cosy and dear, yes, charming as a mansion. The mansion no more monopolises every attraction than the cottage is entitled to count itself the one pleasant abiding-place on the face of the earth. Only do not spoil the cottage and its occupants by making them poor, miserable copies of the mansion and its owners.

WINTER IN NORWAY.

THERE is something infinitely impressive in a Norwegian winter. It differs much from our English average winter. No one can accuse the latter of being impressive of aught but its tiresomeness and annoyances. Sludge and fog and influenza are its attendant spirits, and heartily do we wish that we could exorcise them from our midst. Our winter is, in fact, a season to be borne as best it may. We do not expect to get much pleasure from it.

But in Norway it is otherwise. "Ah," it was said to me when I first spoke to a Norwegian of my intention of travelling in his land in January, "if only your countrymen knew how we loved our winters they would come to us then as they come in summer. But they are afraid of the cold. They do not know any better." To be sure, there is another strong deterrent from touring on the bounds of the arctic circle at Christmas-time. That consists in the shortness of the days. But even this is no such crushing calamity. After a time one gets accustomed to lamplight during all the hours of activity spent indoors. Besides, the northern stars and the moon seem much more luminous than our moon and stars. It is as easy, or nearly, to sleigh at ten o'clock in the evening as at ten o'clock in the forenoon. For the romance's sake, the night travelling is much to be preferred. It is little less than exquisite to glide amid the soft tinkle of the sledge-bells from one upland valley to another, with the tender shadows disclosed by the moonlight on either hand athwart the serried ranks of the still pines, past the bound lakes all mantled in snow, under the lee of great mountains draped with waterfalls all as rigid and silent as everything else in Norway in winter.

A Norwegian Fjord.

Of course there are drawbacks. Now and again the sweet succession of blue skies, keen bracing air, and starlit quiet nights is broken by tumultuous snowstorms. These are not by any means pleasant to encounter on the *fjelds*, even in the broadest of winter daylight. They hide the track, and not infrequently make drifts a score or two of feet deep, almost concealing the tall pine trunks which are set to mark the thoroughfare upon such occasions. At these times the post may be said to have the high roads of the *dahls* to itself. The worthy conductor of the mail-bags makes his stage prepared for all emergencies. He may have to abandon the letter-bags and his horse and sleigh, and flounder for his life towards the nearest post-house. This, however, would be an exceptional adventure. It would hardly be less exceptional for him to be called upon to draw the revolver which he carries so conspicuously by the side of his huge fur coat.

The tourist will not be disposed to face this, the rougher side of the Norwegian winter. Yet if he have a measure of audacity he may come well enough through the trial and not regret his experiences. The sensation of fighting against the northern winds, heavily charged with snow, is a strong one. You must not mind being iced as to eyebrows, beard, and moustache, even to a painful degree. Moustache and beard will freeze fast to the fur collar of your coat, which you have, of course, drawn to the crown of your head. The engaging element of danger is with you. Perhaps you are midway between two post-houses, ten kilo-

metres from either (and with no inhabited dwelling intermediate), when your horse plunges neck deep into a drift. The Norwegian horse is a plucky little animal, with abundant resource in his stolid disposition. He does not mind sinking to the chest once or twice every ten minutes. His blood is not of that aristocratic kind which tends to engender exhausting irritation against obstacles to his comfort. But it is too much even for his plebeian nature to feel the earth, as it were, falling down unfathomably from his feet. The consequence is that, with the snow almost to his ears, he seems to regard himself as a doomed quadruped, or, at least, so near being doomed that he may only escape by a series of frantic struggles which in effect worsen rather than improve his position. These predicaments are hard for the mere traveller, whether he be or be not accompanied by a *skydsgut*.

It is also trying to be pitched out of your sledge several times in an hour. For the most part these tumbles are laughable enough as incidents. But there are times when they involve very apparent risk. For instance, where the road skirts the river of the valley (frozen still, and blanketed deep in snow), at any height above it, and where the mountains rise steeply upon the other hand. A capsize means much. The snow on the river below looks firm: so firm, indeed, that to fall upon it were like falling upon a granulated pavement. But there is no knowing. It may be soft as sea foam, and the force of your shock upon it might carry you through its yards of depth until you touch the cold green ice of the river. I am sorry to suggest such an unpleasant idea; but it is by no means an extravagant possibility. Experience has made this clear to me.

Then, too, the post-stations in winter are very dismal as hotels. In summer it is not so. The little places in the dog days are quite gay, and well furnished with fish, flesh, and fowl, as well as white bread, for the English, who tour through the land with the irresponsible *carriole*. But in winter the station-people stare in amazement at the tourist—and well they may. Yet not for long. Once they have comprehended him, they do their best. The long-disused guest-room is hurriedly prepared, wood is lighted in the reluctant stove, and the *menu* is announced. Alas for the visitor's appetite! in the wilds this last is pretty sure to be of the lean kind. There may be ptarmigan—this is the fairest hope. But the good wife laughs at the notion of eggs. Her fowls have methodical ideas. They are not like British hens, which can be coaxed to lay when the thermometer marks ten degrees of frost. They do not propose to add to the population—even tentatively—until the spring has set in. Swarthy bread, dried meats, and reindeer may, however, generally be had; and with those the tourist must content himself. He need not find it a difficult task, even though cooked reindeer sounds better than it tastes.

I could say much more about the trials of winter touring in Norway. But though I might convince the reader that the game was not worth the candle, I should not so persuade myself. The charms of the ice-bound, snow-clad country would still assert themselves in memory. One single night trip on the *fjords* would suffice to cancel the list of the wintry inconveniences. The water here is so deadly dark where the snow peaks do not illumine it with their marvellous reflections, and the mirrored light of the stars in its depths is so strong that one can study the constellations as easily below as above. As I have already suggested, the omnipresent silence is perhaps the most remarkable feature of difference between wintry and summer Norway. The voice of the waterfalls is suspended.

Inland, too, it is weird and alluring at the same time to go for miles through the forest, with the snow piled magnificently high among the boulders and the tree trunks. By day the gold of the sunlight on the snow-wrapt firs, and at night the even more congenial sheen of the moon's rays create an infinite variety of magic effects. The pallid coral-red of the dawn on the mountain tops is not like the dawn light of summer. Moreover, it comes at a time when the average mortal may behold it without rising at an unseemly hour. Breakfast is over, the sleigh-bells have been tinkling outside for half-an-hour, and the bearskins are ready. Once snugly ensconced, we may take the reins and give the horses their desire. The music of the bells then begins anew, while the stars fade into the pale blue sky, the sun slowly acquires force, the mountains lose the first blush of their beauty, and the golden daylight creeps down from one valley point to another, over the dark forests into the valleys, until at length it touches the unblemished white surfaces of the lakes in the hollows.

The quietude of the land in winter is, of course, remarkable. This is so in every part of it save where human ingenuity has set manufactories. In the towns the snow deadens sound. The people move about in furs, many wearing prettily-braided Lapp shoes of reindeer skin, with the fur outermost, upon their feet; or they glide from house to house in sledges, the horses of which may carry bells, though as often as not they are without them. Unless the weather is unusually mild, or no snow lies, you do not see the housewives and peasants idling at their doors. Oh dear no. They leave that diversion to the magpies, who alone seem to break the silence. As many as four or five couples of these talkative birds may sometimes be seen hopping about the threshold of a house. They appear to enjoy the season, and to have a very great deal to say to each other, though whether in civil mood or anger it is not for a mere man to say. The Norwegians welcome the magpies to their homes as a token of "good luck." They would not kill one for a great deal. In the same way it is interesting to mark the poles set in front of the houses, with small sheaves of corn tied at the top for the lesser birds to dine upon and treat as a meeting-place. This custom obtains, too, in the large towns like Christiania and Drammen, where the sheaves are fastened to the window sills.

Except on the *fjords* near the towns, and on pools swept for the purpose, the Norwegians do not skate much. This may seem surprising, but it is true. The snow is generally an insurmountable bar to it. A pool may be swept easily enough if it has but a foot or two of snow upon it; but when the snow is lying yards deep—that is another matter. Norwegian energy does not as a rule extend so far. The people are content to read in ancient news sheets that their countrymen can beat the champions of other nations at this pastime; but for their own part they are satisfied with the exercise they get on snow-shoes.

Norwegian snow-shoes differ from Canadian snow-shoes in being narrow as the foot from extremity to extremity. This really seems an advantage, for it makes locomotion in confined places possible, where with broad soles it would be out of the question. They are pretty things, just looped on to the toe by a thong in the middle And very well do the accomplished natives get along on them.

I remember one day, when we were sledging from Gulsvig to Ringnaes, by Lake Kroderen, having an excellent proof of the speed the Norwegians can make on these things. We, each in his own sledge with a horse, had gone two or three miles on our way, when we missed a

piece of luggage. It had been left at the hotel. We were, therefore, meditating about a return when we came upon two roadmen engaged in making a rough track for travellers through the snow, which was fathoms deep in the pine woods on either hand. These men had their snow-shoes with them. Our guide mentioned to them our dilemma. It seemed impossible for us to get round in the deep trough of snow. With few words one of the men just slipped into his snow-shoes, and scudded back by the way we had come. "Go on," he had said to our guide before leaving us, "I will catch you up." And so he did—in a surprisingly short time. It was fine to see the impetuous, yet controlled, way in which he shot down the road where it inclined steeply. These slopes cost us in our sledges no little trouble, for it was necessary to hold the horses until we were half down them, and only then to let go and trust that we did not toss head-foremost into the snow at the bottom. But our friend merely stood like a rock, with his long feet close together, and balancing himself with his pole. "There it is," he said, as with a glowing face he threw the parcel into the sledge. He was going off quite unconcerned about remuneration for his exertions; but we called him back and, after some argument, persuaded him to accept a crown (1s. 1½d.), though he seemed to think our interest in him quite needless.

At another time we came across two men travelling upon one pair of shoes. But this, of course, was only possible down hill. Each man got up the inclines as best he could, the one with snow-shoes having no advantage over the other. Going down, however, the shoeless man stepped on to the long runners behind, and, with his hands lightly on the other's shoulders, went down merrily at the rate of fifteen miles or more an hour.

It is not so easy to snow-shoe as it looks. We tried it one morning on a sliding meadow (all snow-clad, of course) behind the house in which we had spent the night. Our host's boys were having fine fun here, and seemed rather to enjoy letting us try our skill. But the usual misfortune for the novice happened to us. Our legs ran away from us and brought us ignominiously down in an attitude very like what professional acrobats call "the split." The lads, in their descent, all took a deep jump in one part of it, landing neatly and squarely on their shoes side by side. This jump was especially fatal to us. I thought I should have been smothered where I fell sideways into a profound drift of soft snow.

It is a cheerful, impressive life the Norwegians live in winter. To the stranger it may well seem tiresome in the extreme to be penned up perforce as they are for weeks on end. But it is not so at all. At other times in the year there is plenty of field work and dairy work to occupy all the hours of the day, and but little time for social enjoyment. Winter is the season to make up for this deficiency. Cards and dancing are much in vogue. At one house in which we stopped, the men danced their particular native dance for us. Its ungainly and quaint fashion may be imagined when I say that it seemed to consist of a succession of earnest attempts to kick the rafters of the ceiling, about a yard higher than their heads. They were so wonderfully agile that some of them all but achieved this portentous task.

"The reason why we like America," said one Norwegian to us, "is that we can get on well there, and have our Norwegian winters into the bargain."

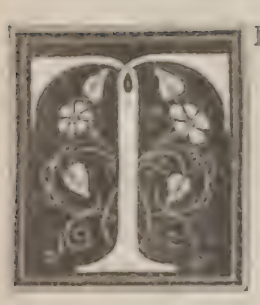
One could not make a greater mistake than to imagine the Norwegian dislikes the long-nighted months of December, January, and February.

To an Englishman there is only one experience more striking in its way than the transition from winter in England to winter in Norway, and that is the re-transition from winter in Norway to winter in England.

CHARLES EDWARDES.

CONCERNING "MUDDLERS."

BY JENNIE PERRETT.



THEY require no formal introduction, so well are they known, the members of the large community of "muddlers."

To sum them up briefly, they are persons who never can be trusted to go on straight lines, or work according to rule and method without constant supervision.

Left to themselves (as for obvious reasons they prefer to be), they invariably do the second thing first, and drive those who are unfortunate enough to have dealings with them to the verge of distraction by their shiftless ways and hopeless blunders.

Muddlers are to be met with in all ranks of society, from the rich, fashionable lady who invariably invites the wrong people to meet together, and then mildly wonders why her parties are not more successful, down to the boy who takes the edge off your carefully cherished, best Sheffield cutlery, and with an amount of energy that would be praiseworthy if it were more profitably employed, removes the last faint trace of polish from your boots.

The business world knows the muddlers—into the merchant's office, behind the counter, into the workshop and the yard they find their way. That they do not remain long in one place goes without saying. As a rule their room is generally found preferable to their company, and they are granted ample opportunity of testing the truth of the old proverb that tells us "the rolling stone gathers no moss."

Literature is not free from them. Hazy as to dates, sublimely indifferent as regards localities, and holding the strangest views with reference to quotations, the literary muddler limps along, pausing occasionally to wonder why he does not overtake the busy toiler who deems no point too minute for his consideration.

It is in the home, however, that muddlers have the widest scope for the display of their peculiar and unenviable powers. Here they have occasions afforded them that they would vainly seek elsewhere, and here they cannot be requested to "move on." In the home they have to be borne with like toothache, rheumatism, and all the other ills that flesh is heir to.

Sometimes it is the head of the household who is the muddler. If so, then meals, as far as he is concerned, are moveable feasts, and the times of his downsitting and uprising are always simply matters of conjecture and speculation.

"He may come in at any minute, or he may not," unfortunate callers who desire to see him are informed. The chances are that he will not come, and the best way of meeting him—far preferable to a waste of time and temper in trying to make appointments which he, on his part, will never keep—is to watch one's opportunity, and catch him "promiscuous like" in the street, and endeavour to settle matters then and there.

The muddler is always dilatory in paying his debts. Not because he has no money, but because he overlooks the fact that the people he favours with his custom may possibly require a little. He can show you a whole bundle of "accounts rendered," he reads these through sometimes, then having convinced himself that the items are all correct, he puts them carefully away again as if they were the title deeds to an estate he hoped some day to claim.

Alas for the household whose mistress is a muddler, and who, in all domestic matters, is entirely at the mercy of her servants! In vain for her to preach "Order is Heaven's first law" in the kitchen, while she practises the exact opposite in the drawing-room. Should she be fortunate enough to secure in these degenerate days one of those priceless beings spoken of as "a perfect treasure," "a servant of the old-fashioned school," the chances are that the "treasure" will decide to seek at the end of one brief month a more congenial sphere of labour, leaving her bewildered mistress once more to the mercy of her fellow-muddlers, who apparently rejoice in a state of confusion and disorder.

By way, we presume, of apology for their shortcomings, we are frequently informed that muddlers are "good-tempered."

They have need to be. Surely it is enough that they should severely try the tempers of others; they may at least be expected to keep their own. Little enough have they whereof to boast, let no one deprive them of that little. Should they manifest extreme irritability or sullenness, or a spirit of discontent in addition to their trying peculiarities, their much-enduring friends might indeed despair of any reformation ever taking place.

It is useless to argue with a muddler. It is like travelling round a circle—you find you are constantly returning to the starting-point. Whatever reformation is effected in the muddler's case must be from within, not from without. He must rouse himself from his lazy condition, for laziness is the root of the evil. A muddler, if not physically, is always mentally indolent; and until he can be led to think, and induced to exercise his own mental powers, instead of taxing those of others, no permanent improvement can reasonably be hoped for. Only when he fully realises the true value of time will he strive to amend his ways, bearing in mind the fact that "Time wasted is existence; used, is life."

LOOKING BACK.

BY ETHEL F. HEDDLE,

Author of "Martin Redfern's Oath," etc., etc.

MOTHER, were you ever tempted between good and evil, between wrong and right? I don't mean in little things, but in a crisis which would mould your life—with love on the one hand, and honour and truth on the other?"

Mrs. Mowbray looked up from her low chair, quietly, though her eyes were anxious and troubled. "Frank, we are tempted thus many times—I amongst others. My dear son, we know where alone to find a shield and buckler!"

"But, mother, I—I love her."

The words were like a wail, and Mrs. Mowbray rose and gently laid her hands on his arm.

"Then this has to do with Olga?"

"She never seemed to care for the idea of my going into the ministry," Frank said, and he resumed his restless walk, his young face white and haggard. "And though I told her of my promise to my dead father, of my own strong desire, she would only smile—you know her way—and say she knew I would overwork myself; and then this uncle from Chicago came, and he has made me an offer to take me back with him to his business. It is a good offer, I know; but I could not—I could not, and I told him so. And then Olga came to me. She was angry, mother. She said she was unsuited for a minister's wife, that she had hated the idea of it, that this uncle was a millionaire, and that I must decide between her and the ministry."

"Well, my son?"

He paused then, Mrs. Mowbray standing pale and gentle by his side.

"Mother, you know how I love my future work—that I promised my father. But, oh, mother! you don't know a man's love for the girl who——" And then he broke off, and his mother sat down again.

"Frank," she said gently, "do you remember the parable of the rich young man, whom Christ asked to give up all for Him? Sometimes He asks us still, dear, to give up our all. The young man went away sorrowful. I would not have you sorrowful with the world's sorrow, my darling. The other ache and loss—ah! He is able to take these away, so that they are as if they had never been. He will make it all up to you."

"Oh, mother, I know. But Olga, my pretty sweetheart, my little laughing darling!"

"I think of her; I know what it will be. But to be quite true, to be honest, Frank, would the woman who loved you as she ought to love you put such a choice upon you? Olga does not say, like faithful Ruth of old, '*Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.*' Every true wife says that, with her arms around her husband's neck, with all her heart, if his God is her God. Instead, Olga would chain you to herself and the world. The work would not be wrong; but to you, who have put your hand to the

plough, it is wrong—it is a looking back." Her voice fell away then, and she rose and moved to the door with a soft kiss, which the young man hardly felt.

And thus she left him alone, with God and his temptation.

The summer night fell softly outside. The birds were singing, a great bed of white carnations sent their exquisite fragrance through the room—Frank would never see them again without a shiver — and love and Olga fought strongly for possession of him. He loved her dearly, even while reason told him that the gay, winsome, careless girl was not the woman to help him, not the helpmeet, the brave, unselfish wife he had dreamed she would be. No, a few words of her own sister's came back to him even now, like an arrow-dart. "You think Olga perfection," she had said mockingly, "Olga, who has a heart you could put on a pin-point, and who is the most selfish person in an eminently selfish family! She would not do for a minister's wife. So take warning." And his promise to his father—his own promise to Christ! Olga's face, laughing, mocking, tormenting, the blue eyes cold and brilliant, the lips smiling even at his horror and pain, came back to him again; and then he remembered how her pretty hands had clung round his neck last of all, "You love me best. You won't give me up, Frank?"

"Mrs. Mowbray gently laid her hands on his arm." *p.* 17.

He could have cried out then, "No—ah, no! anything but that!" and he took a step to the door as if to fly and tell her so.

And then he was conscious of the picture which hung above him near the door, of the divine face which looked down on him as if through the shadows—Christ's face, which no mortal hand can ever give us, but which genius dimly shadows—patient, tender, compassionate, pitiful, questioning! And his mother's quoted words haunted him, and the face seemed to have a warning love even in its pity.

"*No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*" Would he, having put his hand there, look back and deliberately place himself beyond the pale of that kingdom?

He covered his face with his hands. The dusk fell, and night came. All was silence and dimness—no sound stirred in the quiet house. And at last, in the grey dawn, Mrs. Mowbray heard his step, and she came to meet him.

She put her arms around his neck. "Frank, you have decided?"

"Mother, I could not give Him up!"

* * * * * *

These things are past now, and the ache and sting they brought are gone long ago, though Frank suffered as he had hardly dreamt he could suffer; for Olga did not mourn his defection. She left London for the States, after an angry and wholly scornful letter in answer to his, and there, after only a few brief months, she married a wealthy American.

When he read the notice sent him, Mowbray sat long in the study, his hands lying on the paper, and his face pale

and set. He had loved her, and love does not die easily. It stings and rends and burns; it is a torture hard to bear even in its death agony. He was different from that day; all boyish light-heartedness was gone for ever. He was graver than he had been, and he was always rather a silent man. But, ah! how wise and good, how tender and patient! Sorrow and suffering and loss had taught him sympathy and charity; they had softened his nature, and had tried him as silver is tried. Working in the East-end for many years, his health broke down at last, and his mother took him abroad, where one day, amongst the gay crowds at Cannes, a lady came up to them with a little boy. She was fashionably and richly dressed, but her face had lost its colour, and she was world-weary and faded, discontented and restless. He knew her, and she him, and he put his thin hand on the boy's head, as if in blessing. And then they parted, Olga looking up half flippantly, half wearily as she went away.

"Do you forgive me, Frank?"

"Long ago," he said, "and I pray God to bless you.

He died a few months later, and his mother did not grieve. She would follow him soon, to the bright city where all his weariness was over, and the Master, for whom he had given up all to follow Him, was the Light of the City, and would be there to meet her too. And Frank now was in the light of *Home!*

A PRISMATIC PIECE OF ADVICE.

BY BETHA FARR.

TAKING a walk one day, we came to a grocer's shop that had a bit of blank wall alongside of the window. To-day this wall was blank no longer, it had a something nailed on it all framed and glazed. And just because it had not been there the previous day when we walked past, it caught our attention, and before we had time to get near enough to take a good look at it, there suddenly started out from it sideways, as if by magic, in white letters on a blue ground, this piece of advice—

DON'T WORRY—TRY.

We were so "taken aback" that it never occurred to us to look further into it. We guessed it was some trick of advertising; but all the same it seemed a very kindly action of whoever stuck it there to give away, free gratis, so good a piece of advice.

DON'T WORRY.

That's easier said than done. But what a blessing it would be if only we *didn't* worry! "Care killed the cat," and it is quite certain that more folks are killed by worry than by work.

Some of us make our own worries. Most of us have worries that come upon us in God's appointed way; they are part of that way, and we cannot escape them. It may be racking pain, or poor health; it may be disappointment and sorrow, or business anxieties, or family cares. In these cases it seems very like mockery to say—"Don't worry." And yet the Old Book says it, and God is not one to mock His sorrowful children; the words steal through the discords of life's worries like a strain of sweetest melody—"Rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him, and He shall give thee the desires of thy heart."

Many of our ordinary, every-day worries would flee away like mists at the rising of the sun if we brought to bear upon them that very short word—

TRY.

Here is Master Jack wrinkling up his brow, and biting the end of his pencil into uselessness over that long sum. "I *can't* do it," sighs he, "it bothers my brains." Some parent or guardian presents full at him the one word—"Try." If Jack is a sensible lad he does try, and, lo, the worry is gone. Or it is Mary sighing over a long seam, taking two slow stitches, and then a despairing look at the unfinished yard or two. "I hate sewing," she says; "I shall *never* get to the end of this seam." All the sympathy she gets from mother is—"Try, Mary, try."

Big folks need to turn their own advice upon themselves. One half of the non-successes of the world would never have been if men and women, instead of sitting down to worry over what is or what might have been, had, instead, buckled to with a determined "try." Better to work than to worry any day; for even should the trying not be eminently successful, there is satisfaction in the feeling that at any rate we have done our best.

Isn't it astonishing that we so much prefer the worry to the "Try"! It is a kind of luxury which some of us would not voluntarily dispense with; we feel a species of mild resentment if anyone gifted with clear sense points us straight to a solution of our worry. In fact, some of us have an indistinct idea that a change cannot rightly be made, a plan resolved upon or carried out, until a due amount of worry has been expended. A friend was once arguing with her landlord as to whether she could or could not terminate her tenancy at a certain quarter-day. We suggested that reference to the lease itself would settle the question, and offered to fetch it; but, no, our friend preferred to worry over the pros and cons rather than have it thus settled. She evidently enjoyed the uncertainty, although she declared that it worried her to distraction.

How many of the money worries of life might be altogether avoided by prudent forethought! "I am so worried about the future," says a husband and father. "I am not so young as I once was, my energies begin to flag; how it will be with my family when I am taken is a night-mare haunting my pillow." Aye, but legitimate care in the past would have done away with this present worry; had there been the saving and the laying by instead of the easy spending of the entire income, what a dismissal could now be given to the nightmare! Now and again these good people justify themselves for their take-it-easy ways by quoting the exhortation—"Take no thought for the morrow," forgetting most conveniently that the true translation reads—"Take no *anxious* thought," *i.e.*, "Don't worry." It certainly does not mean make no wise provision for the future, since another part of the Bible says—"If a man provide not for his own house . . . . he is worse than an infidel."

To worry is one thing, to think wisely and to act prudently is quite another; the former is prejudicial to success in life, the latter is an essential means towards success in the home, in business life, in study, in art, in everything.

The two parts of our piece of advice are "joined together" and must not be "put asunder." "Don't worry—Try."

REPROOF.

AWHILE ago one of my girls came in to see me ; she looked pale and drooping, and her eyes had dark circles under them ; she had evidently been crying. Presently the trouble came out. One of the elders in her family, who had a right to do so, had reproved her for a fault.

"It is not," said poor Bess, "that I mind F——'s speaking to me about it ; but she did scold me so. She acted as if I did it on purpose ; as if I meant to do wrong, when I never thought of such a thing. I knew as soon as she spoke that I shouldn't have done it, but she made me so mad that I lost my temper and answered her back, and then she said that I was saucy and impertinent, and we had a dreadful time, and now I am so ashamed and sorry that I don't know what to do."

Which was the greater sinner in the sight of God—the impulsive girl, who had been betrayed into a fault through heedlessness, or the experienced woman who had provoked the child to wrath beyond endurance by her bitter reproof ?

It is quite possible to make a child understand and feel your love even while you are dealing with him severely on account of his fault.

"My mamma loves me," asserted a little fellow once, "every minute, when I am bad and all ; but she doesn't love my *naughties*."

"That is a *bad* sin," said a little girl with a quivering lip, as she nestled in her mother's arms after punishment. "It keeps coming all the time, just when I don't want it to."

"Yes," answered the mother, clasping the child closer, "it is a very bad sin, and it gives us a great deal of trouble ; but we will fight it every time it comes until we drive it right out of your heart, won't we, darling ?"

The child assented. She understood very well that it was the sin, and not the poor little sinner, that the mother was combating.

Many a time a parent reproves when the child should only be pleasantly corrected. A mistake is not a fault. How courteous we are when we correct one another ! "I beg your pardon," we say ; "isn't it possible you may have made a mistake ?" One can easily bear to be corrected in that manner ; but how few take the trouble to spare a child's feelings ! Thus, "What do you say that for ?" "You know it isn't so." "What a stupid child !" is often said. Or else the child is ridiculed. "Only fancy," is the cry, "Frank" or "Fannie," as the case may be, "really thought so and so. What ridiculous ideas children have !" And the poor child, no matter how he may struggle to conceal it, is hurt and mortified, and an injury is done to his moral nature by such unkind treatment. A child ought never to be reproved before strangers. If a reproof is necessary, take him from the room.

Much of the necessity for reproof is done away with if you show a child that you have confidence in him, and expect him to be good.

In a beautiful sketch which I once read of an old South American "mammy," the author says (I quote from memory), "It was hard for a child to be persistently naughty under Aunt Rosie's regime. Her 'little ladies' were 'jist agoin' to be good.' Or 'Mars George didn't go for to do dat nohow ; it was a mistake, sure enough.' And no child could long remain sulky or mischievous under such persistent confidence and cheer." Many people far better educated than Aunt Rosie might well study her methods.

I once knew a sprite of a child, loving, hot-tempered, and quick as a flash mentally and physically. She was the torment and the delight of her family, both at once, for they loved her, though none of them could manage her. Someone had to watch her continually. She was always playing pranks, and was continually being scolded and reproved. But when she was under the care of a certain lady who was a friend of her mother's, she was as good as a child need be. Miss Marion could take her out visiting or to church without any mortifying consequences. She could come in and put her to bed, or give her a dose of medicine, or do anything with her that she chose, and Dot never failed her. The mystified family declared that Miss Marion had some special charm with which she beguiled her. But no. The explanation was, very simple. Miss Marion had confidence in the child, and she never scolded her. And the consequence was, the little creature found it so pleasant to be trusted and approved of that she would do anything to retain her friend's good opinion.

A reproof should be a rare thing in a child's experience ; and the parent should be sure when one is given that the child is better for it instead of worse.

THE IVY.

PUSHING the clods of earth aside,
Leaving the dark where foul things hide,
Spreading its leaves to the summer sun,
Bondage ended, freedom won :
So, my soul, like the ivy be ;
Rise, for the sunshine calls for thee.

Climbing up as the seasons go,
Looking down upon things below,
Twining itself in the branches high
As if the frail thing owned the sky :
So, my soul, like the ivy be ;
Heaven, not earth, is the place for thee.

Wrapping itself round the giant oak,
Binding itself from the tempest smoke,
Strong and brave is the fragile thing,
For it knows one secret—how to cling :
So, my soul, there's strength for thee ;
Hear the Mighty One, "Lean on Me !"

Green are its leaves when the world is white,
For the ivy sings through the frosty night ;
Keeping the heart of the oak awake
Till the flowers shall bloom and the spring shall break.
So, my soul, through winter's rain
Sing the sunshine back again.

Opening its green and fluttering breast,
Giving the timid birds a nest,
Coming out from the winter wild
To make a wreath for the Holy Child :
So let my life like the ivy be,
A help to man, and a wreath for Thee !

WE must be watchful, especially in the beginning of the temptation ; for the enemy is then more easily overcome, if he be not suffered to enter the door of our hearts, but be resisted at the very gate on his first knocking.—*Thomas à Kempis.*

SOME of our readers may have seen the gored skirt and Medici or Swiss band combined. These skirts are intended for wear with a blouse bodice of any contrast material, and the skirt and bodice will give an admirable idea for doing up an old dress. The skirt is cut and lined in the ordinary way, and the Medici band, hooked at the back, is lined like the skirt, and pieces of whalebone put in back and front to keep it in place; it is sewn to the skirt band as far as four inches from the place where the skirt fastens at the back. The band and skirt are sometimes cut in one, when they are made to fit by about eight dart pleats, all of which should be boned. This method is often adopted for young ladies and children, when the upper part of the bodice and sleeves is made of silk, or a mixture which contrasts with the skirt. We can supply our readers with a paper pattern of either of these skirts at the usual price.

Fig. 41.

Black trimmings are again used on brown, green, and even on dresses of light shades. Jet and passementerie are the most prominent.

Fig. 41 shows a neat design for a lady's cloak; if sleeves are used in the under part, it could be worn without the upper cape on warmer days. The back of the cloak and also of the cape are braided, as is also the front of the cape. There is another similar design to this, which is very convenient, being in two pieces. The skirt piece is made separate and buttons round the waist, and the upper cape is closer-fitting down the front than the one shown in our illustration, and is mostly finished at the back with a hood. We can supply patterns of this, if any of our readers prefer it.

Fig. 42 shows a lady's dress made in a material of narrow stripe, and trimmed with ruchings of black silk. The body is made over a fitting lining which fastens down the centre, and the material is pleated on the shoulders, and brought down nearly to the waist. Below this is a deep Medici band which fastens at the side—this must be well boned in order to keep it in place. A pointed front and collar are made of velvet. The ruching is about four inches wide, and is made in treble box-pleats. One or two rows of this ornament the skirt and edge the corselet band, and also trim the cuff of the full sleeve. Ends of velvet finish the front of the band.

Fig. 42.

Fig. 43. Here we show a boy's overcoat. This year's volume will give our readers all they require for a boy's outfit. Our April number showed suits; in June we gave the cricketing shirt; in September the Inverness cape, and now we show an overcoat. Perhaps this is a difficult garment to make, but we give the illustration and pattern because our readers will be able to manage it for the younger boys, and some may have one of father's left-off coats, which will cut down and make a good school coat. We saw one of these turned to capital account by an ingenious mother a short time since.

Fig. 43.

The capes of Fig. 43 are made separate, and are attached to the coat by buttoning under the turned-down collar. The coat takes one and a half to two and a half yards of cloth, according to the size required. The edges can be stitched or bound with braid.

Fig. 44. Here we give a pattern for a little boy's pinafore made in striped muslin. The model was made for a boy of three, and took one and a half yards of stuff. A pointed yoke is made, and below this the two widths of material are set on in box-pleats. A band of insertion about nine inches long, and two inches wide, finishes the waist. From this a strip of muslin six inches wide is set on, and tied with bow and ends at the back. Embroidery edging finishes the neck, sleeves, and bottom of the pinafore.

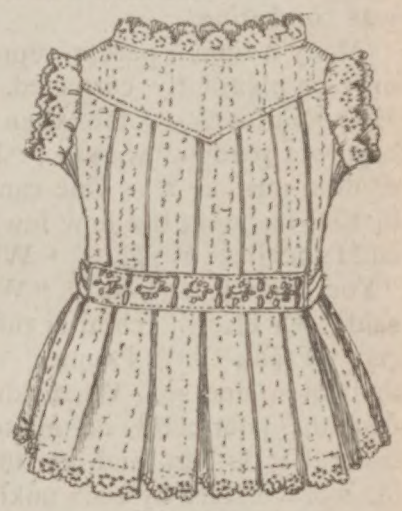


Fig. 44.

Flat patterns can be supplied, Figs. 41, 42, and 43, 6½d. each; Fig. 44, 4½d. Address, "M. C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, E.C.

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